



# BUSINESS **FIRST**

FORT LAUDERDALE

2010 EXECUTIVE REPORT





A New Business Retention and Expansion Initiative of



#### 2010 BUSINESSFIRST CORPORATE SUPPORTERS



#### 2010 BUSINESSFIRST TEAM

Chairman

Ronald Perkins, American Document Management

John Brant, Patriot Risk Management, Inc.

Joan K. Goodrich, GSD Southeast Consulting

Frank Herhold, Marine Industries Association of South Florida

Lynn-Ann Ierna, Midgard Management, Inc.

Dan Lindblade, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

Chuck Malkus, Malkus Communications Group

Daniel D. McCawley, Greenberg Traurig, P.A.

Dev Motwani, Fort Lauderdale Economic Development

Advisory Board Chairman, Merrimac Ventures

Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Law Office of Burnadette Norris-Weeks, P.A.

Karen Reese, City of Fort Lauderdale

Stephen Scott, City of Fort Lauderdale

Nicole Scudder, PNC Bank

Lynn Shatas, Florida Power & Light

Bonnie Smith, WorkForce One

James Thaw, Broward Health

Jim Wagy, Tropical Financial Credit Union





## 2010 BUSINESSF1RST EXECUTIVE REPORT

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler .....	4
A Joint Message from BusinessFirst Leadership .....	5
BusinessF1rst Program Overview .....	6
Key Findings and Executive Summary.....	7
2010 One-on-One Visit Highlights .....	11
Opportunities for Action and Next Steps.....	12
Special Thank You .....	14



*Intracostal View of Downtown Skyline*

## A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR JOHN P. “JACK” SEILER

During the past seven months, the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce have been working together to poll and meet with representatives of both small and large businesses through our new joint business retention and expansion initiative called BusinessF1rst.

BusinessF1rst was launched in September 2009 with the full commitment of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission. Since then, the BusinessF1rst team, comprised of business volunteers, Chamber leaders and City staff, interviewed more than 900 business owners and executives in an effort to:

- “take the pulse” of local businesses and their perceptions of Fort Lauderdale’s business friendliness and readiness;
- establish a baseline for business service levels and needs and to discover any issues that required attention;
- provide business assistance to companies deemed to be “at-risk” of leaving Fort Lauderdale or who may have expansion plans; and
- let our business community know that we are grateful that they call Fort Lauderdale home.



I am pleased to report that there is a very strong sense that Fort Lauderdale is a good place to have a business and a majority of business leaders would recommend Fort Lauderdale to another executive. At the same time, I also recognize that we can always do better in delivering services and reducing impediments for companies that want to relocate and grow in Fort Lauderdale.

I look forward to working with our City Commission, City Administration and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce to take the necessary steps to improve Fort Lauderdale’s reputation as one of Florida’s top business centers. Together, we will reap the benefits of our collaborative actions – new jobs and capital investment for our local economy.

Very Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John P. “Jack” Seiler  
Mayor

## A JOINT MESSAGE FROM BUSINESSF1RST LEADERSHIP

We are pleased to present the 2010 BusinessF1rst Executive Report. Letting our companies and businesses know that we are glad they call Fort Lauderdale home and that we stand ready to assist them in any way is at the heart of the BusinessF1rst business retention and expansion initiative.

The City of Fort Lauderdale and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce partnered in this new initiative along with the seven corporate supporters - BrowardHealth, Florida Power & Light, Patriot Risk Management, The Las Olas Company, Midgard Management, PNC Bank and WorkForce One - who stepped forward to contribute their time and financial resources to this inaugural program. We also thank our BusinessF1rst volunteers who dedicated themselves to ensuring the program's success.

It is clear from our conversations with business owners and executives that Fort Lauderdale has a solid reputation for business. With additional attention to service enhancements and strategic reviews of local business regulations and factors, Fort Lauderdale has an opportunity to strengthen its reputation for business friendliness and readiness.

The Chamber and the City recognize they must support economic development as a priority in the City of Fort Lauderdale. We pledge to work closely together along with all of our other economic development partners throughout the county and state to address key factors and issues facing businesses looking to create jobs and generate capital investment in our community.

Through BusinessF1rst, we will continue to do our part in helping existing companies thrive in our city.



*Dan Lindblade*



*Ronald G. Perkins*



*Stephen Scott*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Lindblade".

Dan Lindblade, President & CEO  
Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald G. Perkins".

Ronald G. Perkins, Chairman, BusinessF1rst  
American Document Management

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen Scott".

Stephen Scott, Director of Economic Development  
City of Fort Lauderdale



## BUSINESSF1rst PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Recognizing the economic recession as an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in new ways, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the City of Fort Lauderdale agreed to initiate a joint business retention and expansion program.

Designed to proactively address the needs and ideas of local businesses, the new initiative was named BusinessF1rst and was launched in September 2009, with the full commitment of the City of Fort Lauderdale – its City Commission and Administration – and the Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors. In addition to the City and Chamber, seven corporate supporters signed on to provide financial resources and leadership to the program. Also, representatives from the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Economic Development Alliance, the City’s Economic Development Advisory Board and select members of the Chamber were recruited to complete the BusinessF1rst team.

Once in place, the BusinessF1rst team immediately moved forward on two parallel courses - one to implement a telephone survey to local businesses with the assistance of PMG Associates and the other to formulate a one-on-one visitation program with key established and emerging decision makers. Both efforts allowed the team to reach a cross-section of business and industry leaders, gauge their perceptions, determine the current state of their businesses and identify impediments or opportunities for future growth.

It was also anticipated that requests for business assistance would be generated from the BusinessF1rst program. As a result of the business assistance, the program will be able to impact several key economic development outcomes including jobs, capital investment and commercial-industrial square footage.

### BUSINESSF1rst KEY MILESTONES

<b>July 7, 2009</b>	<b>City Commission Approval of BusinessF1rst Program</b>
<b>September 16, 2009</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst Launch Event with Mayor, City Commissioners, City Staff and Business Leaders</b>
<b>October 2009</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst Team Training</b>
<b>November – December 2009</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst Business Climate Telephone Survey</b>
<b>November 2009 – March 2010</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst One-on-One Visits</b>
<b>April 28, 2010</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst Launch Event with Mayor, City Commissioners, City Staff and Business Leaders</b>
<b>May, 2010</b>	<b>BusinessF1rst Executive Report to City Commission</b>

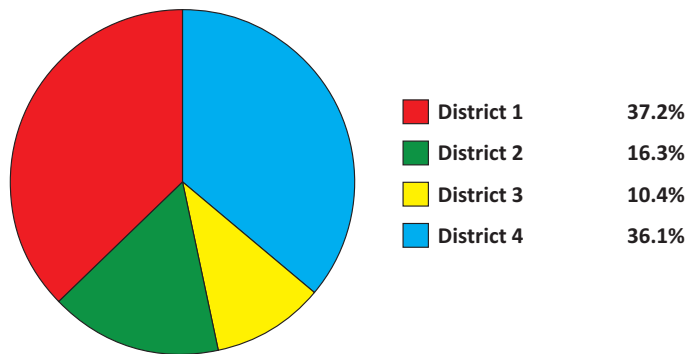
## 2010 BUSINESSFIRST KEY FINDINGS AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last quarter of 2009 and during the first quarter of 2010, BusinessFirst surveyed more than 870 local decision-makers from some of Fort Lauderdale's leading businesses to understand the relative strength of their businesses at this point in time, to gauge their perceptions of the local business climate and identify any potential actions that could assist the business community. Representing a cross-section of industry sectors, these decision-makers may be the best predictors of recovery in the local economy. Respondents include both small and large employers from traditional and emerging industries.

The telephone survey was conducted by PMG Associates, Inc. to a total of 870 businesses located within the municipal limits of Fort Lauderdale. The respondents were distributed based on the type of industry and the physical location of the firms. In this way, a true cross-section of the business community was surveyed. The results are valid with a 95% confidence level within a margin of error of +/- 5%.

Telephone calls were made to the businesses and the survey interview was conducted with a responsible party (owner, manager, etc.) who understood the business and its conditions. Total anonymity was kept in the process with no identification of the specific business and the responses.

### RESPONSE BY COMMISSION DISTRICT



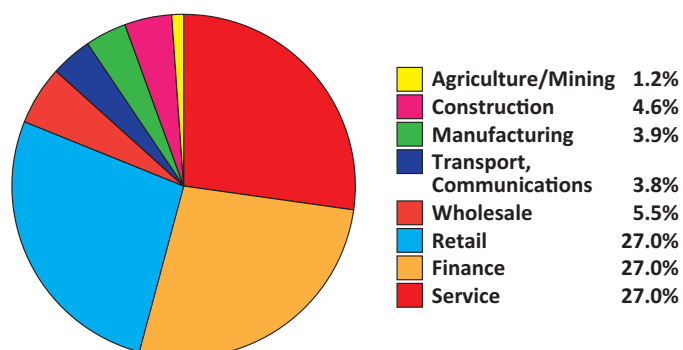
### DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYS:

The surveys were distributed by Commission District based on the number of businesses that exist in each District. The distribution reflects the development of commercial activity in each section of the City.

### CLASSIFICATION OF BUSINESSES:

The data obtained regarding the number and type of businesses in the City was derived from Claritas, a nationally recognized source of demographic and business information. The allocation of the total number of surveys was also based on this information. The allocation of the 870 completed surveys is as follows:

### SIC (Standard Industrial Code) CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES



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## 2010 BUSINESSFIRST KEY FINDINGS AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

### DEFINITION OF THE BUSINESSES IN FORT LAUDERDALE:

- The businesses in Fort Lauderdale are generally the sole location of the business or major facility. Nearly 70% of those surveyed defined themselves in that manner.
- A significant percentage of the businesses have been in Fort Lauderdale for over 10 years, indicating a solid economic base.
- A majority (55.2%) of the businesses are small with a size of less than 2,500 square feet. In addition, 79% have a staff of between 1 and 9 people. The average workforce per business is 15.74.
- Although a majority (54%) rent their space, the amount of ownership (42.3%) is very significant, adding to the notion of a stable economy. Many of those that do lease, have longer term contracts.
- Most firms did not have a difficulty in recruiting personnel. Only 26% of the total respondents noted that they had some difficulty. The combined categories of Skilled Managerial and Technological personnel were the most difficult to recruit. However, the category with the highest number of responses was Entry Level employees.

### REASONS FOR LOCATION IN FORT LAUDERDALE:

The general location was the single most significant factor in opening a business in Fort Lauderdale. Many businesses were also established by people who were already residents, or had family in the area. The overall business climate was the third major factor in the establishment of new businesses.

A very large percentage (83.1%) of the respondents noted that the factors that led to the establishment of the business are still valid today.

### BUSINESS IMAGE OF FORT LAUDERDALE:

Most of the respondents have a very positive view of the business image of the City with 83.9% answering very favorable or favorable to this question. Of those who viewed the image unfavorably, the primary reason was the bad economy and the higher costs in the area.

Regarding a recommendation to someone else to establish a business in Fort Lauderdale, a total of 72.2% responded that they would give a favorable recommendation. When ranking the City of Fort Lauderdale as a place to do business, 79.9% rated the City as excellent or good.

These factors all lead to a conclusion that the business community believes in the City of Fort Lauderdale as a business center. The negative reason of a bad economy is a global condition that is basically the same everywhere and is not confined to Fort Lauderdale. The issue of high costs may be addressed in the form of taxes and fees. However, there is no evidence that the governmental levies are higher here than any other location.

***When ranking the City of Fort Lauderdale  
as a business center, 83.9% rated  
the City as very favorable or favorable.***



## 2010 BUSINESSFIRST KEY FINDINGS AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

### CURRENT ECONOMY:

Fort Lauderdale has felt the effects of the national and international economic downturn just as other business centers have. This question asked the businesses how they were weathering the economic downturn. There are several items that can give some comfort to those attempting to strengthen the economic base of the area. A total of 25.7% of the companies stated that they had no change in the amount of business, while 9.3% indicated that they experienced an increase. These signs are very positive regarding the overall business climate and its ability to withstand the economic forces.

Although most firms stated that they had a decrease in business, only 8.2% fear that they could close down. If the poor global economic conditions continue, some of the other firms that have experienced a decline could also be in trouble.

How is your company weathering the current economic downturn?

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENT
My business could close	71	8.2
My business has decreased significantly	255	29.3
My business has decreased somewhat	234	26.9
No change	224	25.7
My business has grown	81	9.3
No answer	5	0.6
TOTAL	870	100.0

### BUSINESS ASSISTANCE:

50.3% of the respondents did not feel that they would be able to take advantage of any business assistance provided by BusinessF1rst. Of those respondents who did desire some assistance, the economic issues of Tax Incentives and Small Loans were the most popular. Business networking was another of the most popular responses indicating that some marketing assistance would be valuable.

There were limited responses to training and recruiting assistance. However, when extrapolated over the entire universe of businesses in the City, the number of firms that could take advantage is significant.

## 2010 BUSINESSFIRST KEY FINDINGS AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

### EXPANSION/RELOCATION/HIRING:

The percentage of respondents that are planning a reduction in size in the next two years is small (7.0%), especially considering that more firms are planning an expansion (9.8%). These facts could lead to the conclusion that the overall climate is more positive than negative. Although it would be desirable to have greater expansion plans (82.5% to have No Change), in today's global economy, this is a very good sign.

Only 12.0% of respondents are considering a move out of Fort Lauderdale in the next two years. Many of these respondents are using the current economic times as a reason to retire.

Expansion can also be examined through the intent of businesses to hire additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) personnel. The answers indicate that 20.4% of all respondents do plan to hire additional personnel within the next 12 months; a strong sign for this economy. The average number of new hires is 4.27 per company. If we extrapolate this over the entire number of businesses in Fort Lauderdale, the total number of new jobs is estimated at over 13,900.

***20.4% of all respondents plan to hire  
additional personnel within the next 12 months.***



*Crown Center LEED Silver Building Along Cypress Creek Corridor*

## 2010 ONE-ON-ONE VISIT HIGHLIGHTS



*Las Olas Boulevard*

The BusinessF1rst Team met with 38 local key decision makers and business owners to explore their perceptions of the business environment and to listen to their thoughts and ideas about improving the City of Fort Lauderdale's reputation as a business center. Feedback from the one-on-one visits was consistent with the telephone survey. All business leaders expressed appreciation for the site visit and encouraged the BusinessF1rst Team to continue this goodwill initiative.

### BUSINESS CLIMATE ASSETS

- Availability of Qualified Workforce
- Quality of Life
- Arts & Culture Offerings
- Favorable Tax Structure
- Outstanding Airports-Ports
- Higher Education System
- Proximity to Caribbean and Latin American Markets

### BUSINESS CLIMATE CHALLENGES

- Development Services and Permitting Regulations/Processes
- Overall Cost of Doing Business
- Cost of Living
- Perception of Quality Education System (K-12)
- Maintenance and Food Service Talent for Hospitality Industry
- City Signage, Noise and Parking Ordinances
- East-West Commuting Patterns
- Advanced Engineering Talent

### BUSINESS CLIMATE OPPORTUNITIES

- Cold Storage in Port Everglades
- Regional Transportation Plan with an Emphasis on Mass Transit
- Strategy to Attract Target Industries, International Organizations and Enterprises to City
- Fixed Bridge Restoration Plans and Impact on Marine Industry
- Business Resource Guide and Workshops
- Transportation Loop from Tri-Rail to Cypress Creek Corridor
- Aesthetics, Green Space and Quality of Life in Downtown Area
- Food and Beverage Concessions on Fort Lauderdale Beach
- Business - University Partnerships
- FEC Corridor Closer to Downtown
- Vacant Commercial-Industrial Real Estate

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION . . . NEXT STEPS

When the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce launched the BusinessF1rst Initiative, they did so with the commitment to listen closely to what businesses were saying, to act on innovative ideas and to address top challenges in order to advance Fort Lauderdale's economic competitiveness.

### BUSINESSF1RST'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION ARE:

- 1 Local businesses are seeking a stronger commitment to customer service from the City's development review, zoning and permitting services. While there has been some improvement in service, the City's reputation in this area is still not favorable. Enhanced and continuous education to explain key processes and timeframes is recommended.
- 2 Businesses must be able to rely on a timely and consistent process if expansion and relocation plans are to be realized. The City should consider creating a "concierge" service to help guide businesses through the various departments and processes.
- 3 The City of Fort Lauderdale should review its parking, signage and noise requirements from an economic development perspective. The codes should be amended where appropriate and special exceptions considered when appropriate. The ever-changing needs of established and emerging industries must be taken into consideration as commercial property, buildings, corridors and areas are retrofitted and redeveloped to meet current and future requirements.
- 4 Decision-makers and influencers are seeking comprehensive and centralized information on the City of Fort Lauderdale as they consider relocation, expansion and retention plans. Create a business resource guide, toolkit and/or on-line portal that can be easily updated and maintained featuring business assistance, incentives, business climate, quality of life, education and workforce data and information. The new tools must be promoted and need to be distributed widely in the community for the highest impact and value.
- 5 To aid companies in attracting and retaining a quality workforce, facilitate and promote additional partnerships between local businesses and colleges and universities with a special emphasis on growing advanced engineering talent.



*Midtown New Development*



- 6 The City and the Chamber should devote more resources toward promoting their economic development vision in established and emerging business districts and corridors, including but not limited to Uptown-Cypress Creek, Federal Highway Retail Corridor, Fort Lauderdale Beach, Midtown, Northwest, Downtown, Las Olas Boulevard, 17th Street Causeway and other key areas. By coordinating efforts and key messages with key stakeholder groups and economic development partners; enhanced attraction, expansion and retention projects will be realized.
- 7 The City of Fort Lauderdale and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce should continue to fund and implement the BusinessF1rst program, especially the one-on-one visits, to ensure there is a steady stream of feedback and ideas from the business community. The BusinessF1rst program should also help promote the City's commitment to implement a more business-friendly atmosphere resulting in a stronger City reputation for business.
- 8 The City of Fort Lauderdale should cultivate a stronger relationship with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau to demonstrate its commitment to growing tourism and convention business.
- 9 As expected, there are several companies needing business assistance and other services to support potential expansions. The BusinessF1rst team will monitor progress and status of these new business development projects and will announce results as they are generated.



*Downtown Fort Lauderdale is a Popular Site for Events and Festivals*

## SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to thank the 870 companies that participated in the 2010 Business Climate Telephone Survey and the following 38 businesses who met one-on-one with the BusinessF1rst team to provide an update on their business and to share their perceptions on Fort Lauderdale's business environment.

**Advanced Roofing**

**AT&T**

**BankAtlantic**

**Banyan Air**

**Basic Food International**

**Berger Singerman, P.A.**

**Betty's Soul Food & Barbecue**

**BOSCH - Florida Heat Pump**

**Canvas Films**

**Causeway Lumber**

**CompHealth**

**Cruise Lines International Association, Inc.**

**Crush Law**

**Decon Environmental & Engineering**

**DK International**

**G & G Marine**

**Hill York**

**Holy Cross Hospital**

**Huizenga Holdings**

**King of Fans, Inc.**

**Lauderdale Marina**

**Lauderdale Marine Center**

**LXR Resorts**

**McKinley Financial**

**M.D. Stewart & Associates**

**Moss & Associates**

**Oppenheimer**

**Parkson Inc.**

**Patriot Risk Management**

**RoboVault**

**Ruden McClosky**

**Sharpe Project Development**

**SMF Energy**

**Spherion**

**Starwood**

**Stiles Corporation**

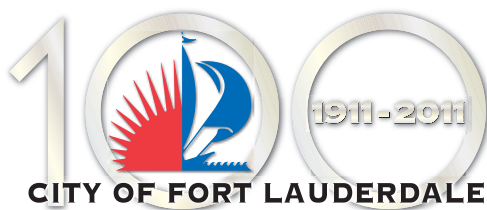
**Templeton**

**The Restaurant Group**

We also thank the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Economic Development Alliance, PMG Associates, S.MARK Graphics and GSD Southeast Consulting for their advice, counsel and assistance with the BusinessF1rst Initiative and Executive Report.



*Fort Lauderdale Beach*



Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler  
Vice Mayor Romney Rogers  
Commissioner Bobby B. DuBose  
Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts  
Commissioner Charlotte E. Rodstrom

George Gretas, City Manager  
Stephen Scott, Director of Economic Development  
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative



2010 Chair of the Board  
Robert W. Barron, Berger Singerman, P.A.

2011 Chairman of the Board  
Christine Madsen, Mad 4 Marketing

Gerard Andrews, TAG Events  
Tony Beall, Precisely Non-Profit  
Charlene Bender, Regent Bank  
Chuck Black, Signs by Tomorrow Fort Lauderdale  
Suzanne Bogdan, Fisher & Phillips  
Robert Boo, The Pride Center at Equality Park  
Nancy Botero, Broward College Foundation  
Anthony Brunson, Sharpton, Brunson & Company, P.A.  
Mark Budwig, S.MARK Graphics Florida  
Sidney Calloway, Shutts & Bowen, LLP  
Barbara Carballo, Citibank  
Linda Cooke, Habilitation Center  
Mark Corbett, New River Design Group LLP  
Courtney Crush, Crush Law, P.A.  
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Patricia DuMont, Manadu Corporation  
William Feinberg, Allied Kitchen & Bath  
Mike Fields, Nova Southeastern University  
Nadine Floyd, The Media Lab / Power Images  
Kathryn Frost, SunTrust Bank  
Frank Herhold, Marine Industries Association of South Florida  
Andreas Ioannou, Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort  
Fred H. Johnson, Project 100  
Paul Kissinger, EDSA  
Irvin Lippman, Museum of Art  
Chuck Malkus, Malkus Communications Group  
Serge Mallat, Mass Mutual Financial  
Lynn Mandeville, Holy Cross Hospital  
Sandra M. Mayor, Bank of America  
Daniel D. McCawley, Greenberg Traurig, P.A.  
Nicholas Milano, Holland & Knight LLP  
Melissa Milroy, The Galleria at Fort Lauderdale  
Brad Minto, Performance Home Theater  
Chuck Mohr, BankAtlantic  
Jim Norton, Lifestyle Magazines  
Chip Rowand, Chip Rowand / Keyes Realty  
Kelley Shanley, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Lynn Shatas, Florida Power & Light Co.  
Germaine Smith-Baugh, Urban League of Broward County  
Clifton Steele, Biztex Services, Inc.  
Carolyn Stewart, Florida Atlantic University  
James Thaw, Broward Health  
Karen Unger, American Document Management  
Michael Walters, PNC Bank  
Dan Young, Young Consulting Group





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